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ABSTRACT

The paper describes a systematic observation instrument designed to describe settings in which young children and adults interact. The Early Childhood Setting Observation Instrument (ECSOI) provides a comprehensive matrix of categories useful in describing and analyzing adult-child interactions. Adult behavior categories included in the matrix are: reporter, manager, extender, observer and socializer. These categories are crossed in an interaction matrix with four child behavior categories: verbal pursuit, environmental pursuit, attention pursuit and passive-non-pursuit. For each category of the instrument a description of intent, a general description of the category behavior and numerous examples of behavior are included. An extended example is given of a supervision strategy for field experiences of early childhood students which utilizes the ECSOI as the primary observation tool. Components of the supervision strategy are: (1) the development of a common language for supervisor and student to describe adult-child interactions; (2) on-site observation; and (3) individual conference and supportive feedback. (Author/MS)

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An Observation Protocol for Early Childhood Settings

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ABSTRACT

An Observation Protocol for Early Childhood Settings

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The document describes a systematic observation instrument designed to be used in settings where young children and adults interact. The Early Childhood Setting Observation Instrument (ECSOI) provides a comprehensive matrix of categories useful in describing and analyzing adult-child interactions. For each category of the instrument a description of intent, a general description of the category behavior and numerous examples of behavior are included.

An extended example is given of a supervision strategy which utilizes the ECSOI as the primary observation tool. Components of the supervision strategy are (1) the development of a common language to describe adult-child interactions, (2) on-site observation, and (3) individual conference and supportive feedback.

An Observation Protocol for Early Childhood Settings

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Early childhood settings include nursery school, day care centers, family day care homes, Head Start centers, play groups, infant centers, kindergartens and the primary grades. The diversity of program goals and appropriate adult behaviors found in these settings demands an observation and supervisory strategy that is equally broad in scope. Systematic, formal supervision is essential for the long term effectiveness of all early childhood programs. However, supervision strategies must be tailored to the needs of individuals and must adequately reflect the goals of a particular program. To develop program-specific, setting-specific or individual skill-specific supervision strategies is inefficient and ignores the commonalities among programs for young children.

The primary tool in any supervision strategy that is directed at maintaining or extending adult competence or working with young children is the collection of information regarding current adult behaviors. The Early Childhood Setting Observation Instrument is designed to provide a systematic tool for collecting information on adult behaviors in a manner which is consistent with the complexity of interactions which necessarily occur when adults and children are together in program settings. The following sections describe the instrument, provide directions for use, and present an extended example of a supervision strategy that is consistent with typical staff development goals in early childhood settings.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The Early Childhood Setting Observation Instrument (ECSOI) is a systematic observation instrument designed to be used in settings where young children and adults interact. The ECSOI provides a skeletal but comprehensive matrix of categories useful in describing and analyzing adult-child interactions. The wide range of categories allows for systematic coding of all adult-child interactions without the need for the observer to make judgments regarding the acceptability or appropriateness of the interactions. The ECSOI is specifically designed to describe, not to evaluate, interactions thus serving as a general observation tool which can be linked to a variety of supervision procedures.

The ECSOI focuses on the type of information, both verbal and nonverbal, which an adult and child may utilize during communicative interactions. Each ECSOI adult and child category also captures information concerning the style or mode of interaction each participant employs in the interaction. The ECSOI assumes that in early childhood settings the style and method of communication are just as important as the substance of the information being communicated.

Those concerned with the adult role in early childhood settings generally must focus on two factors affecting adult behavior: program philosophy and types of child behavior. Adult behavior in a particular early childhood setting is generally keyed to a program philosophy or set of verbalized program goals. Adults attempt to implement goals through behaviors that are reasonably consistent in intent and that are deemed to be conducive to facilitating program goals. However, philosophies and goals of early childhood programs vary greatly, either from program to program or from time block to time block within a single program. Thus, a wide range of categories is needed to record adult behaviors likely to be observed during interaction units.

In early childhood settings, the information communicated by the adult and the mode of the adult's interaction must be viewed in direct relation to the context of the situation at the time of the interaction. Children in the setting are not consciously or consistently operating according to specified program goals. In a general sense, the behavior of children is not easily predictable. Since adult behavior in an interaction unit does not occur in a vacuum, children's behavior must be systematically described in order to preserve the natural context of an interaction. The interaction behavior of an adult is perceived as either (a) a response unit to child behaviors which are either verbally or nonverbally provoking or (b) an initiating unit intended to provoke child behavior.

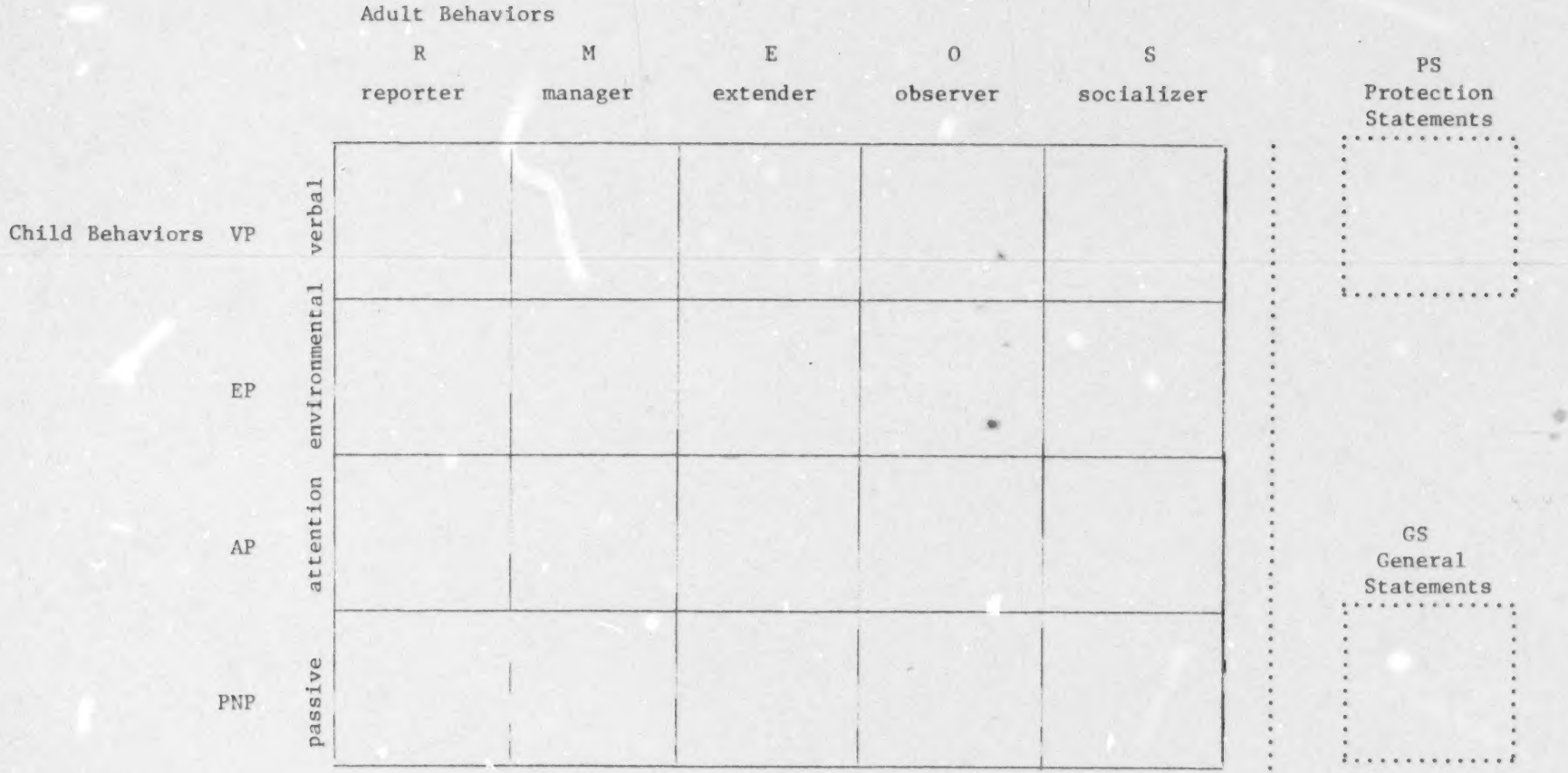
The ECSOI is formulated to describe adult behaviors in relation to child behaviors. Observed behaviors reflect interaction units comprised of single adult-child interactions. The ECSOI is formulated as an interaction matrix to preserve the context and reciprocity inherent in adult-child interactions in early childhood settings.

Instrument Categories

Five categories of adult behavior are included in the interaction matrix: Reporter, Manager, Extender, Observer, and Socializer. Adults may initiate interactions by employing any of these categorical behaviors or may respond to children in any of these categorical modes. These five adult categories are crossed in an interaction matrix with four categories of child behavior. Through this crossing format it is possible to determine whether a particular adult behavior category was employed in a responsive or initiating mode. The four categories of child behavior are Verbal Pursuit, Environmental Pursuit, Attention Pursuit, and Passive Non Pursuit. Chart 1 illustrates the interaction matrix.

Chart 1

The Interaction Matrix



Two additional categories of adult behavior, Protection Statements and General Statements are included in the ECSOI. These categories are not part of the interaction matrix. Adults in early childhood settings are charged with the responsibility of maintaining a safe environment for the children in their charge. Adult behaviors directed toward ensuring a safe environment are independent of program philosophy and, of necessity, are often not part of interaction units with children but quick responses to crises or preventive steps to avert problems. Adult behaviors of this nature are categorized as Protection Statements and recorded outside the interaction matrix.

General Statements are essentially part of the running verbal commentary which adults provide to organize and schedule children's daily activities. Such general scheduling commentary and documentation seems to be intrinsic to settings in which groups of young children are found, but it is not keyed to single adult-child interactions. As illustrated in Chart 1, Protection and General Statements are recorded independently of child behaviors.

Category Definitions

Operating definitions are given in this section for each category of the ECSOI. Each definition is in three parts:

1. a statement of intent which describes the perceived purpose of the behavior,
2. a general description of the behavior which provides a prose portrait, and
3. examples of behaviors.

Child Behavior Categories

VP VERBAL PURSUIT

Intent. The perceived intent of this child behavior is to acquire or obtain information. The information being sought may be factual, affective, abstract or concrete. The mode for the child's pursuit is typically verbal. In some instances pursuit of information may be observed in which the child neglects or refuses to accompany pursuit actions with language. Children always initiate interactions, adults are responsive.

General Description. The child behavior is typically a questioning mode; questions asking for outright answers, confirmation of information, procedures or self-appraisal. Tugging, pointing, pulling, showing an object, etc., focused on eliciting an adult response may accompany the question or function as nonverbal questions. Children always initiate Verbal Pursuit with adults acting as responders.

Examples.

"Why?"
"What does this word mean?"
"Why can't I play with the blocks?"
"What should I do now?"
"Miss Smith, will you fix my smock?"
"Did I put the puzzle together in the right way?"
"Did I tie my shoe right?"

Situations:

Toy stuck under an adult's nose for comment.
Child tugging on adult's clothing, while holding a recently completed puzzle.

EP ENVIRONMENTAL PURSUIT

Intent. The perceived intent of this child behavior is to acquire or obtain information from the environment rather than from an adult or peer. The information being sought may be factual, affective, abstract or concrete. The mode for the child's pursuit is typically nonverbal.

General Description. The child behavior is characterized by pursuit of information through manipulation, management, or interaction with the environment or with materials. In some instances pursuit of information in the environment may be accompanied by language as the child verbalizes solely for self enjoyment. In effect, the child is exploring and questioning the environment. The adult always initiates interactions with children who are evidencing this category of behavior. Children act as the responders to adult behaviors.

Examples.

Trial and error placement of blocks on a building.
Singing to a doll.
Dressing up.
Watching fish in a tank.
Talking to a picture.
Playing with sand, water, or clay.
Placing puzzle pieces in the correct place.
Matching the correct sizes, shapes, or colors.

AP ATTENTION PURSUIT

Intent. The perceived intent of this child behavior is to seek or maintain contact on a social or physical basis with adults or other children. This category excludes perceived intellectual pursuit and related forms of verbal pursuit.

General Description. The child behavior is best exemplified in situations in which an audience of one or more enhances the value of the behavior for the child. The behavior directs attention, both positive and negative, towards the child. The behavior is generally characterized by physical actions which are seen accompanied by verbal comments. The child always initiates the Attention Pursuit interactions with the adult acting as a responder.

Examples:

Talking to interrupt during group times.
Shouting to make a point.
Exaggerated physical movements during activities.
Shouting, running, pushing, etc.
Following an adult around.
Spitting.
Hitting another child.
Snatching an object from another child.
Crying and fussing.
Babbling nonsense words loudly.
Mimicing other children.

PNP Passive - Non Pursuit

Intent. The perceived intent of this child behavior is uncertainty and indecision. Passive-Non Pursuit is characterized by lack of initiative to become involved or by ambivalence in maintaining involvement in any activity.

General Description. The child behavior appears aimless, lacking in persistence or strength of effort. The adult always initiates Passive-Non Pursuit interactions with the child acting as a responder.

Examples.

Wandering for several minutes.
Standing watching activities occur around oneself.
Sleeping.
Sitting without participating.
Passivity, sluggishness or refusal to respond.
(Staring) out the window.
Walking listlessly around the room.
Lying on the floor.
Watching other children play.
Humming.

Adult Behavior Categories

R Reporter

Intent. The perceived intent of this adult behavior is to give feedback and to recognize and to encourage desired child behaviors. Reporting is essentially a positive affect behavior, which may be directed at less than desired child behaviors. The intent of reporting is to provide informational feedback to a child.

General Description. The adult behavior includes reward and praise actions, which can be both verbal and nonverbal. The adult may demonstrate actions or provide requested information. The information exchanged is directly related to the immediate actions of the child. The child frequently initiates the interactions with the adult responding. Adults may occasionally initiate interactions as Reporters, frequently placing the child in a responsive mode.

Examples.

"That is the way to hang up your coat, June."
"Good work."
"No, that's not it."
"The scissors are over by the window shelf."

Situations:

Adult hugs child who has completed puzzle for the first time.
Adult prints the letter b on a child's paper.
Adult puts a smiling face on a child's picture.
Adult denies a child's request.
Adult smiles, nods, or winks in approval.

M Manager

Intent. The intent of this adult behavior is to structure or control a situation beyond providing a simple informational response to a child.

General Description. The adult gives information which enables a child to proceed, structures the next move or activity of the child, and/or manipulates, adds, separates or models activity steps, verbally and occasionally nonverbally. The adult, as Manager always initiates interactions with the child acting as a responder.

Examples.

"Try the red one."
"Trace the letters on the board to spell lion."
"Eric, you may use the sandbox today."
"Watch how I do it, then you do it."

Situation:

Adult holds child's hand as he walks along balance beam.
Adult adds a block to a falling tower to keep it from toppling.

E Extender

Intent. The perceived intent of this adult behavior is to encourage or question the child in such a way as to open new paths for obtaining information by stimulating the child's thinking or to leave decisions up to the child. The intent of the adult is to promote independent logical pursuit on the child's part, to aide the child in associating things in his environment and to develop the conceptual level of the child's thinking.

General Description. The adult questions the child directly or helps the child to question himself. One characteristic of an extending behavior is that different children may respond in different but appropriate ways. The adult can both initiate interactions and respond to interactions in this mode.

Examples.

"Tell me what you have done."
"Why did you use red paint here?"
"What would happen if the lion ate the boy?"
"In what ways are all these blocks the same?"
"Can you think of other foods we eat for breakfast?"
"Who else has a name that begins with M?"
"What other things are tall?"

O Observer

Intent. The perceived intent of this behavior is to remain apart from, and uninvolved in, children's activities. Observing assumes adult awareness of children's behavior.

General Description. Observing includes short or sustained watchfulness of children's activities. It is essentially a nonverbal behavior. Adults may choose to ignore certain child behaviors deliberately or they may be unaware that other adult responses are possible. Adults may directly refuse interaction with children (verbally or nonverbally) when the desire for a response is signaled for by a child. The adult is a responder in this type of interaction. Adult always initiate observing when the child has not directly signaled for a response. Every minute of adult observing equals one tally on the matrix.

Examples

"You can do that by yourself, Lynn."
"No, I'll wait until you have tried to do it a little longer."

Situations:

Adult standing off to side of vigorous block play.
Adult shakes his head or says no to a child's request for help.
Adult ignores disruptive child behavior in a group situation.
Adult observes motor coordination of child working with crayons.
Adult observes water play.
Adult observes problem solving situation in the block corner.

S Socializer

Intent. The perceived intent of this adult behavior is to socialize with a child or with a group of children or to facilitate social interaction among children.

General Description. Supportive, positive, behaviorally descriptive comments characterize this adult behavior. Comments are focused on family happenings, the child's world, peer relations, feelings, and self-image. The adult can both initiate and respond to interactions in this mode.

Examples.

"What a pretty dress you have on, Heidi."
"What games did you play at your birthday party, John?"
"How is your new baby?"
"Kelly, the people in the house corner need someone to help eat dinner. Why don't you join them?"
"Earle, hitting that hard will make Tim cry and then you won't be able to play bears anymore."
"How are you today?"
"What did you do at the birthday party?"
"How happy you seem today, Randy."

GS General Statements

Intent. The perceived intent of this adult behavior is to identify or state information or directions which are of interest to all children.

General Description. General Statements are directive comments which are designed to orient children to procedures and transitions which all children must respond to. Such comments are not specific to an individual child, a particular day or a single activity. The adult always initiates interactions and the child acts as the responder.

Examples.

"Boys only on the blocks."
"It's juice time now."
"We are ready to begin now, children."
"Put your art papers in your locker."
"Don't forget your name tag."
"Line up at the door."

PS Protection Statements

Intent. The perceived intent of this adult behavior is to ensure physical safety for the children in the group. Protection Statements focus exclusively on the rules and procedures necessary for children's well-being.

General Description. Adult behavior may be preventive or crisis-responsive. Adults can identify and enforce group rules and general safety practices. Adult behavior may be directed at individual children or at the entire group. The adult always initiates interactions, and the child acts as the responder.

Examples.

"We don't allow anyone to throw blocks."
"Be sure to carry your scissors with the point down."
"Only one at a time on the swing."
"Tie your shoe so you don't trip."
"Blocks are for building, Sam."
"Don't throw sand in her eyes."

Situations:

Adult moves child with truck away from hot radiator.
Adult removes spilled nails from paved tricycle area.

Directions for Use

Defining the Interaction Unit

The ECSOI is designed to document on going adult-child interactions as they occur in natural settings. A single interaction unit consists of an initiating behavior and a responsive behavior; one or both of these behaviors can be verbal or nonverbal. Adult or child may be the initiator. Observers must determine the beginning point and end point of each interaction unit because interact of the two is to be tallied.

Interaction Unit	=	Initiating Behavior + Responsive Behavior

In general an interaction unit represents a pair of related behaviors. Any incident which involves an adult and child is typically composed of a long string of such interaction pairs. The beginning and end of a single interaction unit is not, then, a total activity; rather, it is an exchange of information which, while contributing to the whole activity, can stand alone as a piece of information exchanged. The elapsed time between initiating behavior and responsive behavior does not effect the establishment of the interaction relationship between the two behaviors. What is important is that the initiating behavior clearly triggers the responsive behavior that then completes the interaction unit. Chart 2 presents a sequence of interaction units illustrating the nature of the relationship between the initiating and responsive behaviors of the adult and child. Note that these behaviors have not been categorized but illustrate simply the beginning and end points of several interaction units.

Either child or adult can initiate an interaction unit or act as the responder in a given interaction unit. Also, behaviors which are part of the interaction unit can be verbal or nonverbal. Charts 3 and 4 show the expected frequency of adult and child behavior by mode: verbal or nonverbal, responsive or initiating. The transfer of roles from initiating to responsive reflects

Chart 2

Examples of Interaction Units

		Initiating Behavior		Responsive Behaviors
Interaction Unit #1	Child:	"I had cereal for breakfast this morning."	Adult:	"Did it taste the same as these cookies?"
Interaction Unit #2	Child:	"No, these taste terrible." (Child spits them out.)	Adult:	"We don't do that in our room."
Interaction Unit #3	Adult:	"Do you need to go and wash your face and hands?"	Child:	Shakes head yes.
Interaction Unit #4	Adult:	"I'm glad you decided to join us again."	Child:	"I like the juice."

Chart 3

Frequency of Behavior Categories by Mode

	Adult Verbal	Adult Nonverbal	Adult Responsive	Adult Interacting
Reporter	Frequently	Occasionally	Frequently	Occasionally
Manager	Frequently	Occasionally	Never	Always
Extender	Frequently	Rarely	Frequently	Frequently
Observer	Rarely	Frequently	Rarely	Always
Socializer	Frequently	Rarely	Frequently	Frequently
General	Always	Never	Never	Always
Protection	Frequently	Rarely	Never	Always

Chart 4

Frequency of Child Behavior Categories by Mode

Child Behaviors		Child Verbal	Child Nonverbal	Child Responsive	Child Initiating
	Verbal Pursuit	Frequently	Rarely	Never	Always
	Environmental Pursuit	Rarely	Frequently	Always (to adults)	Never
	Attention Pursuit	Frequently	Frequently	Never	Always
	Passive-Non Pursuit	Never	Always	Always (to adults)	Never

the dynamics of real life situations. Further, while certain behavior categories are primarily verbal or nonverbal, the complexity of real-life interactions demands flexibility in modes of expression for single behavior categories for both adults and children.

Coding Interaction Units

Each interaction unit corresponds to a single tally mark on the observation record. Tally marks are placed in the matrix cell which represents the intersection of child behavior and adult behavior.

Step 1: Identify the initiator of the interaction unit. If the adult is the initiator the appropriate category for the adult behavior should then be identified. If the child is the initiator then the appropriate category for the child should be identified. As yet no mark has been made on the observation record.

Step 2: Identify the category of the responsive behavior, adult or child. At that point a tally mark is placed in the cell which represents the intersection of child behavior and adult behavior.

Step 3: Code each subsequent interaction unit as a separate tally, grouping tallies in sets of five.

Step 4: Occasionally the initiating behavior in an interaction unit relates to a string of subsequent responsive behaviors. In this case each responsive behavior is tallied as if the initiating behavior had been repeated.

Step 5: General and protective statements are recorded outside the interaction matrix with tally marks in sets of five.

The Observation: Time Sampling Procedures

Observations are recorded for three different five minute intervals. A typical observation schedule is given below:

9:00-9:10 Observer enters and situates himself in a good position

9:10-9:15 First Tally

9:15-9:25 Observer changes position, children probably change activity.

9:25-9:30 Second Tally

9:30-9:40 Observer changes position, children probably change activity

9:40-9:45 Third Tally

As the observer enters the room it is important to be situated in an unobtrusive place; to get acquainted with the situation at hand, and to note the roles of various adults and the physical arrangement of the setting. Spacing observations across a period of time allows the observer to see adults in a variety of roles and interactions, thus increasing the likelihood of capturing a wide range of adult behaviors. In using the time sampling procedures the following steps should be taken:

Step 1: Code three separate five-minute periods.

Step 2: Use different pens to distinguish tallies. In the anecdotal comments the same colored pen is used in writing comments to indicate clearly which tally marks the anecdotal records are referring to.

Step 3: Use tally marks in sets of fives.

Anecdotal Information

Anecdotal information, noted at the bottom of the observation instrument, is a different kind of information than that on the matrix. Incidents which observers feel may prejudice the observation which may be noted anecdotally, e.g., a special visitor, a child bleeding, a pet loose in the room. Recordings of overall atmosphere, classroom climate, use of equipment or materials, and the time of the observation can be noted. Unusual events or details included anecdotally provide a clearer explanation of the observation situation.

Chart 6 presents an example of a single five-minute observation.

Chart 6

A Single 5 minute Observation

Example of one five-minute tally

Anecdotal Comments:

9:55 - 10:00	Children just had a visitor prior to snack time. Transition to snack time was noisy.
Snack Time	Children seemed excited from talking with the visitor. The overall atmosphere was
8 children	then orderly and relaxed. Nonverbal communication was very warm and comfortable.
1 teacher	Physical arrangement of the room was conducive to good management during snack time.

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Supervision Procedures

Early field experiences are integral parts of most undergraduate preparation programs for early childhood teachers. The early field experience offers the students the opportunity for exposure to the requirements of the professional role the student is preparing for and offers the institution the opportunity to select and counsel students in directions most suited to their personal inclinations and skills. The College of Education at The Pennsylvania State University currently offers an early field experience which focuses on three competencies which are seen as "growth points" for the student during and after participation in the experience.

1. Student assesses verbal and nonverbal responses to children through cooperative evaluation with a supervisor.
2. Student develops through simulation and practice a repertoire of appropriate management skills.
3. Student begins to develop professional skills and attitudes.

The early field experience is carefully tailored to contribute to the total Penn State program training teachers for Nursery through third grade level (N-3).

Students enrolled in the early field placements participate in a practicum experience working with young children. Typically, students are placed in field sites which serve children from infancy to age five (day care centers, infant centers, nursery schools, play groups, kindergartens). Each student is expected to work the equivalent of eight hours a week at a field site. Most students will spend two half days (two morning or two afternoon nursery school sessions) on site. A few students will spend one full day (day care) on-site. Students also attend a weekly three-hour seminar.

Supervision

Supervision in an early field experience is an important and critical component for an aspiring teacher of young children. Feedback, support and encouragement can greatly contribute to competent job performance. Students must learn to utilize a supervisor's feedback as a positive input to their growing repertoire of skills.

Through the use of the ECSOI, student and supervisor work together to maximize the growth potential of the field situation. The following assumptions guide the supervisor in working with students.

1. Students need to be guided in acquiring the skills and attitudes conducive to utilizing supervisor input.
2. Student and supervisor need to establish a common vocabulary as well as a common set of goals for the experience.
3. Students need to assume increasing sense of self-supervision for their performances in a field setting.
4. Expectations and goals for the field experience must be congruent with the operating curriculum of the field placement as well as the student's possible role within the field setting.

There are three major components in the ECSOI supervision strategy: development of a common language for supervisor and student to describe adult-child interactions, on-site observation, and individual conference and supportive feedback. The next sections describe in detail each of these components.

Common Language

The development of a common language provides the basis for all subsequent effective communication between supervisor and student. Student and supervisor work toward a common definition of each of the ECSOI categories. Students are encouraged to generate category definitions and examples which are consistent with the prototype definitions but which employ language and examples which are relevant for the student. These definitions become the common language for the facilitation of communication between supervisor and student. The general aim of the supervisor's strategy is to establish a

Figure 1

Rapport-building Process*

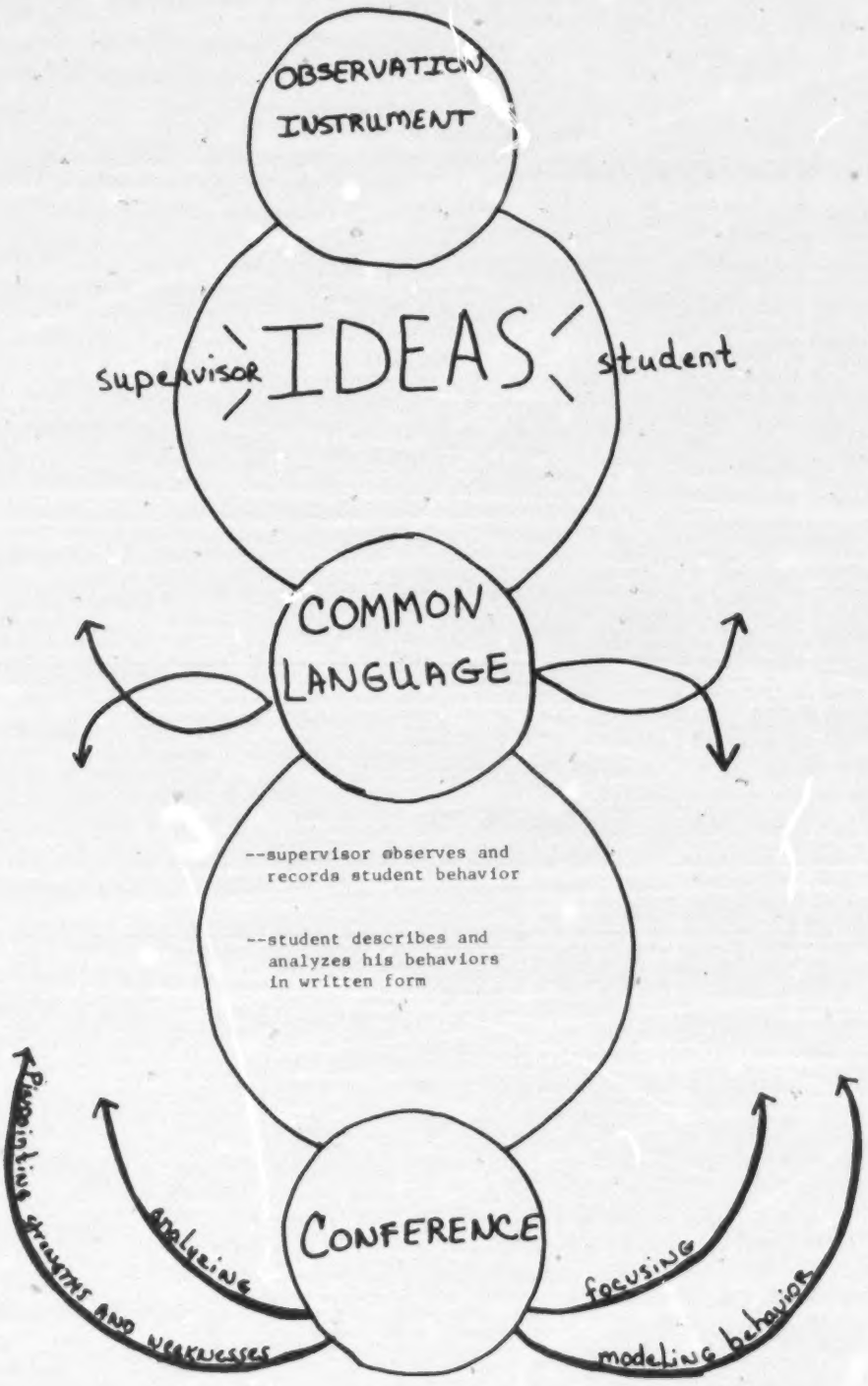

*Figure prepared by Margaret Horn, The Pennsylvania State University, 1976.

rapport with the individual student that will form the context for effective counseling and guidance of the student's work with young children at the field site. The dynamic, interactive nature of the rapport-building process is illustrated in Figure 1.

The supervisor uses an eight-step procedure to guide students in the development of a common language.

Step 1: General presentation and orientation to the ECSOI by the supervisor.

Step 2: Role play of adult-child interactions by students. The supervisor demonstrates coding procedures used in observations.

Step 3: Students write definitions for each ECSOI category.

Step 4: Students generate examples for each ECSOI category.

Step 5: Brainstorming session with supervisor to help students clarify and interpret category definitions.

Step 6: ECSOI categories disucssed and definitions refined.

Step 7: Role plays occur and students practice coding interactions using their definitions.

Step 8: Observation and coding are discussed, giving the student practice in interpreting coded interactions.

On Site Observation

At the placement site the supervisor observes and records student behavior. The supervisor observes the student in a variety of situations with young children. Figure 2 illustrates a typical observation-conference schedcle for a ten-week period.

Figure 2

SCHEDULE OF SUPERVISION

Typical ten week term (Some students are observed more frequently)

The spacing of observations allows students the opportunity to incorporate supervisory feedback. Frequent observations also give the supervisor more opportunity to observe the student in different types of activities.

Following each observation the student uses the supervisor's coding sheet to describe and interpret his behavior and comes prepared to discuss this self-analysis (See Chart 7) at a conference with the supervisor. The conference, the value of a common language is apparent as supervisor and student are working with a common framework to discuss student interactions. Steps in the supervision strategy related to the on-site observation are:

Step 1: The supervisor observes the student interacting with children in a program setting. The supervisor tallies interactions on the observation instrument for three five-minute periods. Anecdotal comments may be included.

Step 2: The supervisor gives the observation sheet with coded behaviors and comments to the student at the conclusion of the visit.

Step 3: The student assesses his/her behaviors, responding in writing.

Individual Conference

In conference, the supervisor and student cooperatively focus on the coded behaviors and the student's ability to describe, analyze, and assess those behaviors. A consistent framework exists wherein reference is made to the category definitions (common language). Finally, the student discusses his strengths and weaknesses with the supervisor relative to behaviors appropriate for the placement. The supervisor encourages the student to continually monitor and evaluate behaviors within the classrsom. Most importantly the student becomes aware of interaction behaviors, and becomes proficient at self-evaluation completed jointly by supervisor and student at both mid- and endpoint in the experience.

Chart 7

Student Response Conference Form

Student name_____

Observation date_____

To be completed by student following each observation using supervisor's observational tallies.

Describe your verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

Analyze and assess the above.

What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?

Steps in the supervision strategy related to the individual conference include the following:

Step 1: Supervisor and student cooperatively focus on the coded behaviors and the student's ability to describe, analyze and assess those behaviors.

Step 2: The student discusses his strengths and weaknesses with the supervisor relative to interactions appropriate for the placement. The supervisor encourages the student to continually monitor and evaluate behaviors.

Step 3: The discussion proceeds within a consistent descriptive framework using the common language of the category definitions.

Step 4: The student identifies behaviors and becomes proficient at self-description.

Step 5: The student analyzes types of management skills appropriate for the placement.

Step 6: The student writes a summary of the conference based on the points of strength and suggestions for growth which were discussed.

Step 7: A copy of the student's summary initiated by the supervisor goes to the cooperating teacher.

Evaluation

Supervisors key sutdents' behavior and self-evaluation comments to a summative evaluation scale for the practicum experience. Dimensions of the practicum evaluation scale reflect the fostering of a repertoire of interaction skills with young children and the cooperative utilization of supervisory input as well as growth in self-evaluation. Chart 8 illustrates the practicum evaluation.

Chart 8
Practicum Evaluation

Student Name_____
Supervisor_____
Term_____

Student Assesses Verbal and nonverbal responses to children through cooperative evaluation with supervisor

To be completed at mid-term and the final evaluation.

Directions: Indicate the degree to which student evidences the behavior by circling the appropriate number below each item. One (1) indicates that there has been no evidence of the behavior described. Ten (10) indicates that the behavior described has been evident at all appropriate times. Space has been provided for comment below each item.

1. Student reflects an awareness of the many facets of a teacher's role: e.g., feedback, managing, observing, socializing, extending, etc.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

   Comments:

2. Student tries out new techniques and skills when working with young children.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

   Comments:

3. Student initiates activities or provides materials weekly which are suited to the children's developmental level and placement program.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

   Comments:

4. Student adjusts teaching and activities to suit the individual child, or groups of children, he is working with.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

   Comments:

5. Student critically assesses his interactions with children in the placement program.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

   Comments:

6. Student works cooperatively with the supervisor in planning and implementing changes in techniques and strategies.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

   Comments:

Students are expected to be punctual and dependable in meeting placement requirements and will be automatically awarded with 5 points for meeting this requirement. Students who are not punctual and dependable will be penalized 5 points at the discretion of the supervisor.

Total points _____

Points earned _____

Comments:

The Total Early Field Experience

The practicum and related supervision strategies are the most important of the four components of the early field experience. Seminar participation, overall attitude and an instructional project complete the list of required activities.

PRACTICUM - REPERTOIRE OF SKILLS

Students begin to develop professional skills and techniques to be used in a variety of supportive ways in working with young children.

SEMINAR

Students identify types of management skills through active participation and simulation in weekly seminars.

OVERALL ATTITUDE

Students develop professional attitudes and behaviors with peers and colleagues.

PROJECT

Students plan and construct an appropriate learning aid to be used in their placement.